

10 minutes, while it takes an engineer platoon 10 hours to emplace a surface-laid conventional minefield of the same length.

This is extremely significant when you consider the reduction of the number of sappers in combat engineer companies. When I was a company commander, my company had nine ten-man sapper squads. As a brigade commander, my companies had six eight-man squads. The last version of future divisional engineer companies that I saw had four eight-man squads. In combat engineer companies, the 90 sappers have been reduced to 32. This greatly reduces the ability to hand-emplace mines in a time-constrained situation. We have to depend upon scatterable mines emplaced by the Volcano system.

We need to use Volcano as routinely as we would use conventional mines. We need to let people know it's all right to use them in the 15-day mode if the situation dictates. I have found that the brigade commanders I supported didn't routinely plan 15-day Volcano minefields, because they couldn't count on getting the required authority. Instead their fall-back was to depend upon conventional mines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Use specific obstacle restrictions for specific reasons; do not use blanket restrictions simply because "that's the way we've always done it" or "that's the way we did it at NTC."

Allow people on the ground to determine the best way to fight their ground, especially if they are assigned a *defend in sector* mission.

Use Volcano to make up for reduced sapper manpower, to provide faster obstacle emplacement, and to reduce the obstacle logistics.

Develop unit rapid mine teams and drills using Volcano.

Mitigate fratricide concerns with protective fences.

Mitigate future maneuver concerns with lanes and closure with MOPMS.

We have an army that is based on decentralized mission command, but routinely restricts the use of Volcano. The same commanders who impose these restrictions don't think twice about delegating conventional mine emplacement authority to the battalion level.

My message to commanders is: Don't unnecessarily restrict subordinate commanders by routinely withholding authority for Volcano. Withhold the authority only as you would for con-

ventional mines. Don't restrict commanders from bringing all their combat multiplier systems into the fight. Let them know what their Volcano assets are and allow them to use them.

Use specific and not blanket restrictions. A commander would never assign a defend-in-sector mission to a subordinate commander while withholding the use of organic weapons. They need to do the same for Volcano. If they don't, this valuable tool will never be used to its potential. It will not make up for the lack of sapper manpower, and it will not reduce the logistical requirement for tactical obstacles.

Appropriate use of the Volcano system won't get better until maneuver commanders demand it, plan it, and do it. Don't stand for being any more limited than you would be with your main weapons systems.

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Effectively Using Interpreters

MAJOR PAUL J. SCHMITT

As this country's land-fighting component, the Army has needed and employed interpreters in every engagement throughout its history. And because of increased force projection requirements, the need for skilled linguists is growing.

On the strategic level, the Army has made great strides in developing programs for military interpreters, foreign area officers, and the Korean augmentees to the U.S. Army, just to name a few. But the Army must also improve the tactical education of its leaders on

how to employ interpreters.

Small-unit commanders and leaders in an engagement area are often the ones most in need of interpreters, but also often the ones who have the least idea of how to use them properly. This article will examine issues involving interpreters and address questions pertinent to you, the small-unit leader.

For maximum effectiveness, leaders should consider carefully the selection, preparation, and use of the interpreter in each individual circumstance. The se-

quential steps, as you will see, influence each other.

Selection can come from two sources—military and local-hire civilian. Military interpreters can be specially trained, uniformed servicemen, or contracted American citizens. A military, uniformed interpreter with a security clearance is the most desirable, but the demand on military interpreters makes them scarce. In fact, you are not likely to encounter one under normal circumstances. As a result, local-hire

interpreters are the most commonly used source.

Locally hired civilian interpreters have their own characteristics. They can be useful in explaining the surrounding environment, situation, and personalities, or may have access to important information that is not available to an imported military interpreter. Be aware, however, that interpreters will inevitably talk with others in their spare time, about what they have seen and done, or worse, are debriefed by hostile counterintelligence agents when they go home. If local-hire interpreters are allowed in your camp's perimeter, they should be kept in a partitioned area to limit their access to and view of your operations. Additionally, due to their increased status, wages, or perception as collaborators, interpreters may face hostility or jealousy from the locals. You may not have much voice in the initial selection process, but you should be aware of the advantages and limitations of both types of interpreters.

If you are given the opportunity to choose from a pool of talented interpreters, there are several factors that should govern your choice. Although the education and language ability of the interpreter should be your primary consideration, you should take into account other criteria, such as age, ethnicity, sex, personal compatibility or character, and security clearance.

Learn early whatever you can about the cultural and social norms of the area in which you are deployed so as to avoid problems later. There may be occasions when a woman, an extremely young person, or an interpreter of a certain ethnicity could be counterproductive or distracting to your message or its tone. In Bosnia, for example, bringing a Bosnian Croat interpreter to talk with Bosnian Serbs about land claims between the two groups could create perceptions of partiality before you even begin negotiations.

After selecting your interpreter and before any negotiations, clearly explain your requirements and expectations. You must be certain that the interpreter understands that he works exclusively for you and assists you in accomplishing the mission. As obvious as it may

seem, most don't take this first step. Make sure your interpreter understands that he is to translate exactly what you say, and that he must suppress any personal feelings he may have. Be aware that many interpreters sign contracts with a contract agency; both of you should be aware of and abide by its conditions. Explain clearly your standards for his appearance. Much like counseling, strictly enforcing standards of conduct and expectations will make it easier for your interpreter to work within your guidelines. Preparation of the interpreter follows self-preparation.

For starters, you must learn everything you can about the culture in which you will be operating, and your interpreter can help you with this. You should also take it upon yourself to learn basic phrases and words and how to count in his language in order to avoid misunderstandings. Be careful how you use idioms, and try not to include allusions deeply rooted in American culture that will get lost in the translation. For example, I once witnessed a battalion commander attempting during small talk to explain the finer points of a Road Runner cartoon segment. Meanwhile, his listeners had no idea what a coyote was, nor did they really care. Other soldiers have used expressions like "pig in a poke," leaving the interpreter frustrated and confused. Avoid acronyms and military specific jargon at all cost, unless your interpreter has a good grasp of them and can convey their meanings. As part of your interpreter's preparation, you may have to educate him on basic organizational or tactical terminology or the rank structure—ask yourself how many American civilians know the difference between a corporal and a captain or a platoon and a battalion.

In general, it is best to be aware that many cultures are not as business-oriented as we are. In many cultures, our "get down to business" approach is misinterpreted as extreme rudeness. In their culture, real business is accomplished only after an appropriate period of small talk, hors d'oeuvres, toasting, or tea. They will expect you to participate, or at least be aware of their traditions.

While working with your interpreter,

remain in control of the situation and the conversation. You can do this best with physical positioning. Many who use an interpreter, perhaps through faulty logic, place the interpreter between the communicating parties, or off to the side. This places too much emphasis on the interpreter and often leads to your counterpart talking directly to your interpreter, having sidebar conversations, or even worse, questioning the interpreter, while excluding you.

To use your interpreter correctly, position him behind one of your shoulders, so he is partially or entirely obscured. You then simply talk directly to the person you are addressing and wait for the interpreter's translation. Additionally, don't talk to your interpreter using such phrases as "Tell him that ..." or "Ask him if. . . ." Simply talk directly to your intended audience and request that the interpreter say exactly what you have said. This way the interpreter conveys your words only and otherwise remains in the background.

Be aware of your interpreter's needs. If possible, interpreters should be given time to rest periodically. They may be poorly adjusted to continuous military operations and could become physically exhausted from wearing body armor and carrying equipment. More important, continuous interpreting is mentally exhausting. Additionally, depending on the ability of your interpreter, speak a sentence or two, and then pause to allow for translation. Be aware that, as a practical matter, conversations will take at least twice as long, since both parties have to wait for their words to pass through the interpreter.

In short, interpreters play an important and sometimes mission-essential role. With attention to the selection, preparation, and employment of interpreters, leaders can develop them into a force multiplier that lets the commander or staff officer communicate clearly and unmistakably.

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